

HOSPITALITY EUROPE BUSINESS NEWSLETTER

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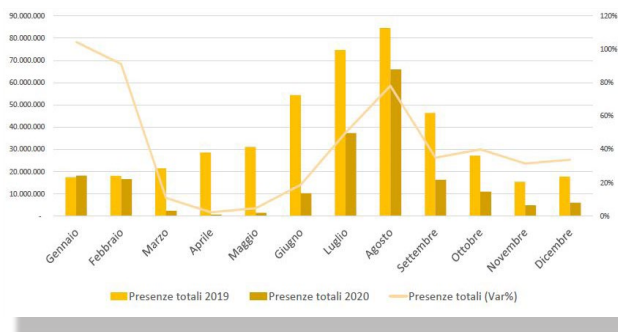
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BUSINESS TRENDS & STUDIES

How did COVID-19 impact the Italian tourism sector? Overview of the coronavirus crisis by Federalberghi



A new report by [Federalberghi](#) provides an overview of the impact that the coronavirus crisis had on the hospitality and tourism sector in Italy.

What happened: the first months of the crisis and the drop of international tourist presences

2020 started on a good premise – with a +4.4% increase in the number of tourists in January compared to 2019.

When COVID-19 hit the country in February, the market immediately registered severe losses (-88.7% tourists in March 2020 alone) and eventually nearly all activities stopped in April and May (-97.8% and -94.8% respectively), with international tourist presences down by 99%.

The situation slightly improved for Italian presences in the following months (-67.2% in June) but international tourists numbers remained low over the summer (-93.2%, -76.4% and -60.4% in June, July and August).

What's next: expectations for the fall and winter seasons

Federalberghi is not expecting the situation to improve in the short-term.

The Italian Government already estimated that new hires in the tourism sector will decrease by 70% between August and December 2020 compared to the same period in 2019.

By the end of the year, overall losses in Italy in 2020 will amount to EUR 14 billion (-57%), with overall 246 million tourists less than 2019 (-56.4%).

Read the full report (in Italian) at the following [link](#).

11 September 2020



LOBBYING

Corona crisis: requests from HotellerieSuisse well received

The image of the summer season in Switzerland can be deceptive. While it is true that many Swiss holiday destinations welcomed large numbers of guests, when viewed as a whole the sector in the country is facing existential challenges – which is why [HotellerieSuisse](#) is successfully fighting for more political support.

A key factor for the forthcoming winter season will be maintaining the freedom to travel. Therefore, together with other tourism associations, HotellerieSuisse is arguing the case for open borders – especially in Europe – as far as this will be possible from an epidemiological point of view.

This request was presented at a political level and consequently, in case of arrivals from countries at risk, now several new motions request that, if a negative COVID quick test can be presented, the quarantine will no longer be required.

Credit waiver in cases of hardship

COVID credits should be awarded fully or partially waived for commercially-viable businesses. HotellerieSuisse was the first association to introduce this requirement at an early stage. Things are now gaining momentum: at the beginning of September, the Federal Council announced that it wants to find a solution for companies badly impacted by the crisis. The coming weeks will be crucial. Each sector will intensify its lobbying and the authorities responsible will have to weigh up different interests.

Master plan for meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) tourism

In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, great challenges confront Swiss urban tourism in particular. This is why, as far back as July, HotellerieSuisse requested additional measures for its further development. A current political push now wants the Federal Council to present a master plan for the improvement of the all-round conditions of MICE tourism and other major events. HotellerieSuisse welcomes this process so that Switzerland can hold onto added value.

United for more support

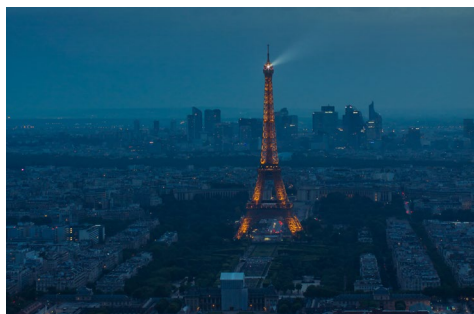
Key players in the Swiss tourism industry are allying and together fighting for more support to solve the challenges facing the industry in the most coordinated way possible. For this reason, at the end of August, ten tourism organisations that have come together under the umbrella of the **Switzerland Tourism Association** were able to present their requests to the Federal Council on the occasion of the 3rd tourism summit. Headed by Mr. Claude Meier, HotellerieSuisse took over the coordination and preparation of the tourist industry's political stance.

24 September 2020

 **SwissHotelAssociation**



European justice validates French law on Airbnb rentals



The Court of Justice of the European Union [validated on 22 September 2020](#) the French law intended to regulate the activity of short-term renting, in a case which opposed the city of Paris to two owners using the Airbnb platform.

This decision was much awaited, as many European cities facing – like Paris – a housing shortage problem have tried to legislate against unregulated tourist rentals on Airbnb.

“A national regulation making the repeated rental of premises intended for short-term accommodation to transient customers who do not take up residence there subject to authorisation is in line with EU law,” the Luxembourg-based EU Court of Justice stated in its ruling.

“The fight against the shortage of long-term rental housing is an overriding reason in the public interest justifying such a regulation” it added.

The European judges had been seized in 2018 by the Court of Cassation, the supreme court of the judiciary in France, of several questions relating to provisions of the building and housing code.

Previously, the Court of Cassation had itself been seized by two owners of Parisian studios, who were fined a total of EUR 40,000 for having rented out their property without the prior authorization of the town hall.

The cases in France are not yet over: the French judge will now have to verify that the city of Paris is indeed providing evidence of a housing shortage and the Commercial Court will have to pronounce on the unfair competition issue brought by [UMIH](#).

22 September 2020



ONLINE DISTRIBUTION

Investigation results from the Bundeskartellamt's Booking proceeding

The German Bundeskartellamt has published a paper on [“The effects of narrow price parity clauses on online sales - Investigation results from the Bundeskartellamt's Booking proceeding”](#) as part of its series of papers on **“Competition and Consumer Protection in the Digital Economy”**.

Andreas Mundt, President of the Bundeskartellamt: *“Price parity clauses are a frequently encountered restriction of online sales. In its proceeding against Booking.com, the Bundeskartellamt looked at the extent to which such*



clauses limit competition, both between the online hotel platforms and the hotels themselves. The paper examines, among other aspects, the effects of price parity clauses and presents the findings on hotels' price-setting behaviour and on consumers' behaviour when booking a hotel room."

The findings give invaluable insight into the quantitative significance of potential "free-riding effects", which are often used as a justification for such clauses.

The Federal Court of Justice has allowed the Bundeskartellamt's appeal on points of law against the first instance decision by the Düsseldorf Higher Regional Court to reverse the authority's prohibition decision against Booking. The court proceeding is still ongoing and the question of whether Booking.com infringed competition law remains open. The publication is exclusively based on the Bundeskartellamt's perspective on the investigation results and the conclusions and assessments it has drawn from them.

24 September 2020



INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY

Hellenic Chamber of Hotels: setting up a sustainable scenery towards tourism innovation



Since its official launch on 10 April 2019 and despite the COVID-19 pandemics, [Capsule^T Travel & Hospitality Accelerator](#) successfully completed so far 2 cycles of the [Acceleration Program](#) and organised, in early September, its first [Idea Platform](#) competition.

Capsule^T can now showcase 28 startups which attended 36 hands-on workshops on business, digital and industry-related topics, received hours of mentoring from industry experts, attended over 24 on-site or virtual visits and participated in 3 local trade shows and more than 15 online

and live events.

Through the acceleration process, 12 startups pivoted their product or business model, gained over 220 new clients and 90 new industry partnerships and run 78 pilots through Capsule^T's pool of partners and associates.

However big the current challenges might be, the [Hellenic Chamber of Hotels](#) (HCH) and Capsule^T's team are still trying to create opportunities for innovation in the tourism industry. During the coronavirus pandemics, the 2 Capsule^T's programs (Acceleration Program and Idea Platform) went remote. Thanks to the support of its strategic partners, the Capsule^T team adapted quickly to the "new normal", worked methodically with the [Judging & Advisory Committee](#) and all partners to support tourism and the startup ecosystem in Greece, and proceeded to build business tools of [Capsule^T's teams](#) – thus enabling them to adapt their startup to the current circumstances and make plans for the future.

Through the Acceleration Program, HCH aims at helping young entrepreneurs scale up their tech startups by coming up with innovative solutions in travel and hospitality.

The program also provides pitching opportunities, online meetups, virtual visits and networking activities, but also learning and networking sessions and participations to trade shows and delegations abroad to connect Greek teams with the rest of the world.

Empowering youth to turn their business ideas into a tangible reality!

Part of CapsuleT's mission is to reinforce and support innovative ideas to create a pipeline of tech startups in the tourism industry. Therefore, during the first 10 days of September 2020 and despite the current circumstances, the CapsuleT team completed online with huge success the first Idea Platform.

After a rich 10-day program which included – among other activities – tailored workshops, mentoring sessions and inspirational talks, the 10 participating teams presented their business proposition before the CapsuleT's Judging Committee and competed for one of the 3 awards.

The 3rd cycle of the Acceleration Program started just a few days ago and the new members of CapsuleT's community are ready to boost their startups' growth and receive valuable feedback from the industry's leaders!

28 September 2020



New “Contactless Menu” function by Tripadvisor to help restaurateurs download and use digital menus for their business

After [setting forth their Travel Safe tool](#), [Tripadvisor](#) is now launching a “[Contactless Menu](#)” feature: a new solution that will help restaurants to safely welcome customers.

The Travel Safe initiative provided Tripadvisor with a deeper understanding of customers' preferences in a post-COVID world. According to the information collected over the summer, visitors are more likely to proceed with their booking when using the newly added safety filter – as knowing more on the respect of health and safety measures by hospitality businesses is now a priority for clients.

Good evidence of this can be found in how the Click-Through Rate (CTR) for properties that added the Tripadvisor Travel Safe information is 16% higher compared to the CTR of properties that do not have these information on their Tripadvisor listings.

The “Contactless Menu” feature could, therefore, be yet another way to ease diners' minds and make restaurateurs' lives easier.

As menus are one of the most handled items in a restaurant, Tripadvisor developed an easy way for all restaurateurs that already added a menu link to their listing to create contactless menus directly from their Management Centre. This new feature enables restaurateurs to obtain a QR code that will allow clients to download and read menus.



The QR code is specific for each restaurant, doesn't change even after updating the menu and the use of this feature is completely free of charges for restaurateurs.

Tripadvisor believes that this initiative might contribute to making clients feel safer and, therefore, come back to their favourite restaurants.

16 September 2020



EDUCATION & TRAINING

Azerbaijan Tourism Training and Certification Center established

The coronavirus crisis emphasized even more the importance of providing an adequate level of training to employees involved in the hospitality and tourism industry.

To increase the professionalism and competitiveness of tourism specialists in the local market, the State Tourism Agency and the Azerbaijan Tourism Board (ATB) have established a Tourism Training and Certification Center (TTCC). The TTCC, operating under ATB, is a great initiative aimed at improving service quality and maintaining the long-term development of the Azerbaijan tourism sector.

The Centre offers various classes for local tourism industry employees and uses innovative teaching methods. TTCC adds value to the traditional education system by involving experienced, highly skilled professionals working in the Azerbaijan tourism industry and issuing certificates to exceptionally successful students as to contribute to their competitiveness in the job market.

23 September 2020



EVENTS & TRADE SHOWS

4th International Hospitality Forum – 23 November 2020



The [4th International Hospitality Forum](#) organised by the [Hellenic Chamber of Hotels](#) will take place on Monday 23 November 2020. This year's Forum is powered by [Phocuswright](#) and, due to the coronavirus pandemic, will be held through an innovative digital platform.

Building upon the success of the past three year's events – which experienced vast participation and large extensive media coverage – the International Hospitality Forum is establishing as the leading dialogue and knowledge platform for the hospitality industry in Greece. Past

editions of the Forum hosted international and Greek experts from the tourism industry, top entrepreneurs, prominent representatives of the academic community as well as high profile companies – such as Phocuswright, ReviewPro, AccorHotels, Hilton, Expedia Group, Google, Ecole Hoteliere de Lausanne, TriVaGo, The Hague, Hospitality Business School, European Tourism Futures Institute (ETFI) & Academy of International Hospitality Research, Marriott International, TUI Destination Services, Avio, Triptease.

This year's panels and will focus on Sustainability in Tourism and Strategies for Operating in a post-COVID-19 world.

28 September 2020



New Baltic Hospitality Forum – 13 October 2020

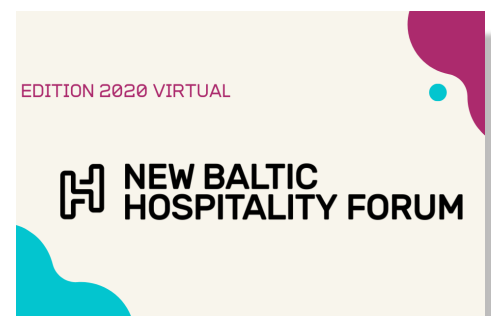
On 13 October 2020, the [New Baltic Hospitality Forum](#) will take place as a free virtual conference that will be accessible to anyone wishing to attend from everywhere.

The conference aims at shaping the future of the Baltic regional hotel and hospitality market, while:

- Bringing the Baltic hospitality region closer together
- Learning from immediate neighbours and beyond
- Meeting industry experts from across the geographies
- Inspiring future leaders in the hospitality sector

On 13 October, 12 sessions with 29 speakers will take place in a virtual environment focusing on topics such as mental health, strategic planning, education, technology, co-operation with government and design as it relates to the hospitality industry.

Check out the following [link](#) for more information on the agenda of the Forum and to register to NBHF2020 Virtual edition.



While the coronavirus crisis and the most recent health and safety guidelines all over Europe prompted the NBHF team to hold the 2020 edition virtually, they all hope to meet in person in the spring of 2021!

14 September 2020



SwissSkills Championships in the hospitality industry – 11-13 September 2020

From 11 to 13 September in Weggis (Canton of Bern, Switzerland), young talents from the industry used the platform provided by the “SwissSkills Championships 2020” to prove their professional excellence in the fields of cuisine, restaurant business and housekeeping.

Due to COVID-19, SwissSkills 2020 – the main SwissSkills championship – was postponed until autumn 2022. However, the individual Swiss professional associations had the opportunity to run “SwissSkills Championships 2020” locally for young professionals. So, in spite of everything, these talented young people were able to prove their professional excellence. This also made it possible to ensure the selection of a strong Swiss team for WorldSkills 2021 in Shanghai.



New blood demonstrates peak performance

On a small scale, it also became clear how demanding these professions are and what peak performances they can elicit. The tasks set required the 12 finalists to give their all. They were well prepared, but the final surprised them with new challenges and required special skills. In the latest [Industry stories](#) from [HotellerieSuisse](#), you can find out more about the tasks that had to be mastered at SwissSkills, how the candidates and expert chefs found the competition and how they gained further exciting insights into SwissSkills 2020.

Deployment of skilled personnel

HotellerieSuisse champions the availability of qualified staff for its members and the industry at the most varied levels and in different sectors. Therefore, the association is particularly delighted by the high level of this year’s SwissSkills and the great motivation and commitment of the candidates. Sincere congratulations to all entrants for their superb performance!

24 September 2020



Back to Business Webinar series – Summer 2020

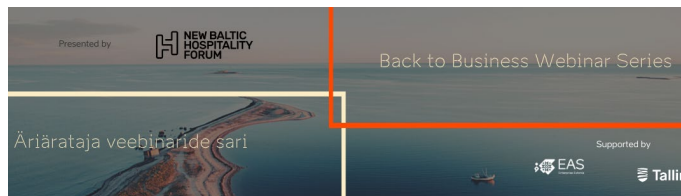
Over the course of summer 2020, the team of the [New Baltic Hospitality Forum](#) organized a weekly webinar series dedicated to all stakeholders in the hospitality sector.

The webinar series explored the current hot topics related to the future supply and demand – e.g. how to restart and keep your business afloat, where to start from and what to do differently, which actions will disappear or be replaced.

International experts, as well as local Estonian business leaders shared their best practises over 7 episodes focusing on the current situation, (new) products and services, cost & revenue management, communication, real estate & finance and the future ahead.

All webinars can be re-watched, and more info can be found at the following [link](#).

8 September 2020





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